

Duxbury Clipper, Thursday, September 30, 1971

## Postscripts by Jack Post

For the last few years, the Conservation Committee and its gaggle of Friends have flocked to the call of the wild and of duty, leading our town to acquire great lots of marsh and woodland, for all the good reasons that we have heard so well expressed on the floor of the Town Meetings. Our green belt has been broadened until now, with the Town Forest and the lands held in trust by the Historical Society, it almost girdles the town's waist. Last March, the town snapped up a land bargain which included a cranberry bog complex that should not only safeguard our water table for years to come, but also, through the shrewd lease of cranberry harvesting rights, should turn the rich fruits of our labors into a moderate pile of pleasantly cool cash.

Last Sunday, with the unexpected cooperation of a northwest wind which held back a rainy front and produced a sparkling early fall afternoon, scores of conservationers drove off the paved confines of East St. west of the turnpike, and bumped along the dirt roads bordering the newly-acquired town bogs, ending on a grassy knoll tucked well back between woods and marsh. There packs of sandwiches were hauled out of picnic baskets, root beer and ginger ale poured from quart bottles while the children were briefly dragooned into sitting down just long enough to be stuffed with provender and pop. Then, before the grown-ups had even unwrapped their fried chicken, poured the coffee from their thermos jugs the kids were peeling off to explore the weathered storage sheds or climb over the couple of abandoned trucks in the sandpit at the edge of the trees.

The large bog below the hill had been harvested that morning, and on its surface floated the left-over cranberries, yellow and red patches against the gray-green mirror of the water. Upstream from the bog, the shallow supply pond, thickly carpeted with water-lilies, receded into alder thickets near the edge of the hardwoods. From the foot of the hill, the bog road crossed and separated the two areas, then disappeared into the woods beyond toward a gap in the trees that might mean another valley. The picnickers would investigate it, after they had scooped up all the sandwich papers and bottles and left the meadow unsullied, with nothing to indicate human presence, except depressions and trails in the long grass, where adults had been sitting and children running.

Meanwhile, they found it pleasant to relax in the sun and listen to an expert expound on cranberry culture, a business that had developed in their own county from a berry of their own vine. The people stirred and looked down at the bog with new interest, knowing a touch of pride in being part of such a thing, asking questions of the speaker, ranging from ecology to economics, until at last it came time to pack up and explore the territory.

Down the hillside and across the dike between the bog and the lily pond the crowd streamed, little boys racing first, up through the woods to the first fork in the path, where they paused momentarily, guessing which way their elders would turn, then racing on anyhow. They would be half way round the pond and back before the crowd had reached the fork at its lower end. Through pine woods the real trail led, around the head of the lily pond onto the blank end of Mayflower St. for a few yards, before plunging back across another series of bogs, to complete the circuit back to the picnic hill. Venturesome individuals followed the long perimeter of the bogs; most of the others cut down through the middle, content with a moderate walk in the warm autumn sunshine. Warm thoughts followed them home too, thoughts of the pleasure of their children and grandchildren in such unspoiled land, and resolutions to complete the job in the critical years to come. Town Meeting would be no picnic, but they would all meet again there.